

## REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request entry of the following amendments and remarks contained herein in response to the Office Action mailed October 1, 2007. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments and remarks contained herein place the instant application in condition for allowance.

Upon entry of the amendments in this response, claims 1 – 12 are pending. In particular, Applicants amend claims 1 and 10. Reconsideration and allowance of the application and presently pending claims are respectfully requested.

### **I. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102**

#### **A. Claim 1 is Allowable Over Hickey**

The Office Action indicates that claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Publication Number 2002/0087646 ("*Hickey*"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection on the grounds that *Hickey* does not disclose, teach, or suggest all of the claimed elements. More specifically, claim 1, as amended, recites:

A communication system comprising:  
a client-side group email folder accessible by each user in a predefined group of users; and  
a group email message in the client-side group email folder, the group email message having indicators, each indicator corresponding to a user in the predefined group of users, each indicator being configured to indicate whether the corresponding user has acted upon the group email message,

wherein ***the group email message is stored in a common database such that the users in the predefined group of users have access to the group email message via the database.***  
***(emphasis added)***

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, as amended, is allowable over the cited art for at least the reason that *Hickey* fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a "communication system... wherein ***the group email message is stored in a common database such that the users in the predefined group of users have access to the group email message via the***

**database**” as recited in claim 1, as amended. More specifically, *Hickey* discloses a “group electronic mailbox 25yx [that] includes a status indicator 57yxz for each of the one or more electronic communications 53yx” (page 4, paragraph [0043]). However, Applicants respectfully submit that *Hickey* fails to disclose, teach, that a group email message is stored in a common database such that users of the group have access to the group email message via the database. For at least this reason, claim 1, as amended, is allowable.

**B. Claim 10 is Allowable Over *Hickey***

The Office Action indicates that claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Publication Number 2002/0087646 (“*Hickey*”). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection on the grounds that *Hickey* does not disclose, teach, or suggest all of the claimed elements. More specifically, claim 10, as amended, recites:

A communication method comprising:  
providing indicators in a group email message, the group email message being provided to a predefined group of users, each indicator corresponding to one of the users in the predefined group of users, each indicator having a setting, each indicator configured to indicate whether the corresponding user has acted upon the group email message; and  
changing the setting of one indicator in response to the email message being acted upon by its corresponding user,  
wherein ***the group email message is stored in a common database such that the users in the predefined group of users have access to the group email message via the database.***  
(emphasis added)

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 10, as amended, is allowable over the cited art for at least the reason that *Hickey* fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a “communication method... wherein ***the group email message is stored in a common database such that the users in the predefined group of users have access to the group email message via the database***” as recited in claim 10, as amended. More specifically, *Hickey* discloses a “group electronic mailbox 25yx [that] includes a status indicator 57yxz for each of the one or more electronic communications 53yx” (page 4, paragraph [0043]). However, Applicants respectfully

submit that *Hickey* fails to disclose, teach, that a group email message is stored in a common database such that users of the group have access to the group email message via the database. For at least this reason, claim 10, as amended, is allowable.

**C. Claims 2 – 7, 9, and 11 – 12 are Allowable Over *Hickey***

The Office Action indicates that claims 2 – 7, 9, and 11 – 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Publication Number 2002/0087646 ("*Hickey*"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection on the grounds that *Hickey* does not disclose, teach, or suggest all of the claimed elements. More specifically, dependent claims 2 – 7 and 9 are believed to be allowable for at least the reason that these claims depend from and include the elements of allowable independent claim 1. Further, dependent claims 11 – 12 are believed to be allowable for at least the reason that these claims depend from and include the elements of allowable independent claim 10. *In re Fine, Minnesota Mining and Mfg. Co. v. Chemque, Inc.*, 303 F.3d 1294, 1299 (Fed. Cir. 2002).

**II. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103 – Claim 8 is Allowable Over *Hickey* in view of *Stark***

The Office Action indicates that claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Publication Number 2002/0087646 ("*Hickey*") in view of U.S. Publication Number 2003/0233420 ("*Stark*"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the reason that *Hickey* in view of *Stark* fails to disclose, teach, or suggest all of the elements of claim 8. More specifically, dependent claim 8 is believed to be allowable over *Hickey* for at least the reason that this claim depends from and includes the elements of allowable independent claim 1. Because *Stark* fails to overcome the deficiencies of *Hickey*, claim 8 is allowable as a matter of law. *In re Fine, Minnesota Mining and Mfg. Co. v. Chemque, Inc.*, 303 F.3d 1294, 1299 (Fed. Cir. 2002).

### **CONCLUSION**

In light of the foregoing amendments and for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that all objections and/or rejections have been traversed, rendered moot, and/or accommodated, and that the now pending claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are hereby courteously requested.

Any other statements in the Office Action that are not explicitly addressed herein are not intended to be admitted. In addition, any and all findings of inherency are traversed as not having been shown to be necessarily present. Furthermore, any and all findings of well-known art and Official Notice, or statements interpreted similarly, should not be considered well-known for the particular and specific reasons that the claimed combinations are too complex to support such conclusions and because the Office Action does not include specific findings predicated on sound technical and scientific reasoning to support such conclusions.

If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (770) 933-9500.

Respectfully submitted,

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